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THE MISSIONARY CULTIVATION OF
STUDENTS

Report of the Conference on the Relationships Between the
Foreign Mission Boards and the Interdenominational
Agencies of North America in the Missionary
Cultivation of Students, held at
25 Madison Avenue, New York, January 21, 1921

On March 25, 1915, a conference was held in New York under the auspices of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, attended by representatives of the Foreign Mission Boards and of the interdenominational agencies engaged in work among students, to consider the various questions of relationship and responsibility raised by their common interests. The findings of this conference were printed for distribution and have been of very real value in suggesting proper methods of procedure. In view, however, of the lapse of time and of fresh experience, it was deemed advisable by the Committee of Reference and Counsel to call a second conference, made up as before, to revise and improve the earlier findings. At this meeting, held on January 21, 1921, there were present delegates representing twenty-five Boards and agencies.

After a careful and prolonged discussion the following revised statement of the principles of relationship was adopted by the Conference.

The statement is printed here as approved by the Committee of Reference and Counsel at its meeting on February 23, 1921.

I. GENERAL RELATIONSHIPS.

We recognize the fundamental principle that the ultimate objectives of the denominational Boards and interdenominational agencies represented in the conference are similar. This principle should underlie and govern all adjustments growing out of questions of relationship. While the denominational Boards are charged with the fundamental task of establishing the Church of Christ in its manifold operations in the non-Christian world, the interdenominational agencies at work on the foreign mission field have come into being at the request of missionaries of different denominations to meet a great and growing special need. Since these agencies are related to no one denomination, they are obliged to draw their workers and support from the Church at large as represented by the several denominations.

II. MISSIONARY CANDIDATES.

1. We commend the announced policies¹ of the student movements when dealing with students purposing to become foreign missionaries, and recommend that these policies be continued, in order that denominational attachments may not be weakened and in order that missionary candidates may become acquainted with the opportunities for service in their own denominations.

2. We recognize with satisfaction the policy and practise which increasingly prevail with denominational and interdenominational Boards, when candidates apply to Boards other than those to which by church membership they are related: of ascertaining the status of candidates with their own Boards; of respecting fully every obligation of candidates to their Boards; and, whenever release from such obligations is sought, of dealing with the Boards rather than with the candidates. We would urge the adoption of such a policy by all Boards. It is recognized, however, that the extended service of a candidate under some interdenominational agency may make it natural for him to seek appointment under that agency.

3. Since this policy should be respected by missionaries engaged in recruiting as well as by Board secretaries, we recommend that all Boards and agencies bring this statement very forcibly to the attention of all their missionaries home on furlough.

4. To avoid all possible difficulties, however, the following mode of procedure is suggested as one insuring comity in the future:

(1) No one who is employed by one of these organizations should be approached by the representatives of another organization or agency with a definite offer of appointment without previous conference with the officers of the organization to which the candidate is thus related.

(2) Leading students from foreign countries, who have been assisted in securing their education or who are now being assisted in this country for further study, should not be approached with appeals or offers until a conference has been held with the organization or person rendering such assistance.

(3) All organizations which approach candidates belonging to different denominations should make early inquiry of the candidate as to whether he or she is in correspondence with any other organization or Board. In any case correspondence with the foreign Board of the candidate's denomination should be taken up to discover whether it desires the candidate for its own work and that it may have an opportunity to present its own claims if desired.

(4) While recognizing the right of every organization to present its claim in the most effective manner, every effort should be made to encourage the use of statements which speak only appreciatively of the work of any other organization. Any appeal made on the basis of a more liberal provision for salary or allowances as between the different boards or organizations interested is to be deprecated. An effort is being made to secure a basis of substantial agreement in this direction for all missionary agencies.

5. We believe that each of the foreign mission Boards should, as soon as possible, set apart a secretary who should make the cultivation of candidates his special responsibility; and that the foreign

¹ Statements of these policies may be had upon application to the Student Departments of the Y. M. C. A. and the Y. W. C. A.

mission Boards should adopt plans which will enable their secretaries to come in contact with their candidates in all classes of institutions, denominational, interdenominational and state, so that there may be developed in these students an adequate knowledge of the work and needs of their Boards; and that as soon as possible the candidate secretary and candidate committee of the Board should help these candidates to plan for their preparation as missionaries.

6. We recommend that the student movements should make adequate plans to facilitate the work of secretaries of denominational Boards at summer conferences and in connection with other student gatherings of an intercollegiate character.

7. We recommend more frequent consultations and correspondence between the secretaries of denominational Boards and national secretaries of interdenominational movements, in order that the spirit of these resolutions may be carried out.

8. We urge all missionary candidates to proceed along the lines of preparation recommended by the Board of Missionary Preparation.

III. MISSIONARY EDUCATION OF STUDENTS.

1. We believe that every denominational institution for education should make some provision for instruction in missions.

2. In secondary schools and academies we would recommend an emphasis on missionary biography and on studies of the great areas of mission activity.

3. In denominational colleges and universities we believe that the departments of Biblical Literature or of Religious Education should include studies specifically missionary in their content and objective. In case no provision for such instruction exists, the mission Board or Boards of the denomination may wisely encourage the establishment of a regular course for this purpose. To focus the interest of the student body in courses which may be offered as a part of the curriculum, colleges should be encouraged to provide adequate lecture courses covering the most important and dynamic aspects of missions.

4. We believe that the time is ripe for strong presentations regarding the cultural and practical values of courses of study in comparative religion, ethnography, Asiatic history, interracial sociology, and the history of civilization to the authorities of state and other non-denominational institutions where such courses are not offered. We believe that the Board of Missionary Preparation, acting as the agent of the foreign mission Boards of the United States and Canada, is the proper agency to further such a proposal.

5. It is our conviction that, whether there be curriculum study or not, mission study classes of a voluntary nature should be established in all higher institutions of learning.

6. In addition to the general study of missions, we emphasize the necessity for the study of denominational missionary enterprises. Due regard should be paid to the selection of textbooks of approved quality.

7. We urge Christian students in the Christian Associations of educational institutions and in local churches to provide programs and devise ways and means to present in attractive ways the broad cause of missions. Missionary giving is a most helpful accessory in such programs, and should be made an important factor in missionary presentation, that missionary impulses may find a helpful expression. Prayer and missions should be brought strongly before the students as a present duty and a high privilege.

IV. GIVING TO MISSIONS BY STUDENTS.

1. We recognize that student givers, individually and in groups, have the right to determine the objects to which their gifts shall be devoted, and that all denominational and interdenominational Boards should respect such rights.

2. In view of the fact that the foreign work of the Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Women's Christian Association is so largely concerned with reaching, for Christ and the Church, the students in foreign lands, and in view of the interdenominational character of state and other non-denominational institutions in North America, it is considered fitting and desirable that the Christian Associations in these institutions seek to secure gifts for foreign Association work or for some other form of interdenominational or undenominational work on the foreign field. In addition, we believe that the students of the respective denominations should contribute for the support of denominational missionary enterprises through the local churches of which they are members or regular attendants; or, where there is no church of a giver's denomination, through such special appeals to a denominational group as may be arranged in consultation with such bodies as the Christian Associations, the Student Council, and the college authorities.

3. We recommend that denominational colleges continue to be regarded as fields for financial cultivation by their respective Boards. It is understood, however, that this arrangement shall embody the same spirit of comity as that expressed in the paragraph above, and, therefore, does not exclude interdenominational or undenominational agencies from securing such support as may be agreed upon in consultation with the denominational Boards concerned and the college authorities.

4. It is taken for granted that all Boards will respect existing financial obligations which have been entered into by the students of any institutions with respect to work they have undertaken on the field through another Board, denominational or interdenominational.

5. We recognize the union institutions on the foreign field as especially appropriate objects of support by any student body.

V. THE ORGANIZATION OF STUDENTS FOR SERVICE IN LOCAL CHURCHES DURING THEIR COLLEGE DAYS.

1. We believe that normal church life is possible and should be established and maintained by students during college life. To accomplish this desired result it is recommended:

(1) That the home pastors and other church workers be urged to inform pastors of churches in college communities of the entrance in educational institutions of new students from their congregations, that avenues of approach may from the first be opened to students by the churches of college towns.

(2) That students be encouraged by their home pastors, by the ministers and leading workers of churches in college towns and by local student Christian leaders to enter into and hold some definite form of membership in the church of the student's own choice in the college community.

(3) That students be enlisted by the churches in definite and normal activities of the church, parish, and community.

(4) That the program of the activities of the young people's society and of the other organizations of the local church with which students are affiliated be adapted to meet the special interests and needs of students.

(5) That the general and women's Boards should devote more time of regular secretaries to work among students, with a view to the establishment as an integral part of their religious experience, of helpful relations with local churches, the development of their denominational consciousness, and of their training for actual service. When circumstances permit, a qualified secretary should be employed for this special purpose, and wherever possible one woman secretary representing jointly the different woman's Boards of a denomination should be employed for such work.

2. We urge that foreign mission Boards should make special efforts to train theological students for, and enlist them in deputation work in churches during the term of their theological study, including vacation periods, to the end that as ministers of churches later they may be fitted by practical experience to coöperate both within and without college communities in the establishment of right relationships between students and the churches; and that Boards in this effort should include non-volunteers as well as volunteers.

3. We urge that in such work and in other forms of service in and through churches the deputation workers should seek to qualify themselves for a variety of definite lines of service, such as organizing and leading mission study classes, organizing and train-

ing missionary committees, advising special groups of church leaders in graded missionary instruction, the promotion of giving, the organization of service and instruction by means of general missionary addresses; and that with this in view special training be provided when practicable for student volunteers and others desiring to enter upon such service, in connection with meetings of volunteer bands, city, or district volunteer unions, and student summer conferences.

4. We believe that special efforts should be made by the proper denominational societies and by the student movements to secure the appointment of able ministers to churches of college towns and communities, and to arouse the people of the churches at large, both within and without college communities, to a realization of the importance of developing and utilizing the force resident in the great body of Christian students now in the educational institutions, thus strengthening the leadership of the churches in all worthy activities for the welfare of our own and other lands.

5. Believing that the formation and strengthening of denominational attachments will be best accomplished by the fullest coöperation between denominational and interdenominational agencies, it is recommended that the representatives of all these agencies further cultivate the closest practicable personal and official relations.

